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E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/18/2016

TAGS: [PREL](#) [SENV](#) [EAGR](#) [IR](#) [KU](#) [KUWAIT](#) [IRAN](#) [RELATIONS](#)

SUBJECT: KUWAIT "POSTPONES" NEGOTIATIONS WITH IRAN OVER
WATER IMPORTATION PROJECT

REF: A. KUWAIT 2443

- [¶B.](#) 05 KUWAIT 1884
- [¶C.](#) 05 KUWAIT 247
- [¶D.](#) 03 KUWAIT 5719

Classified By: Political Chief Natalie E. Brown for reasons 1.4 (b) and
(d)

[¶11.](#) (SBU) According to a July 10 article in Al-Qabas (local Arabic daily), Kuwait has stopped negotiations with Iran over a project to import fresh water from an Iranian river. Citing "informed sources," the article claimed the talks stalled due to logistical difficulties and regional circumstances, particularly "the situation in Iraq" and "Iran's nuclear program." The Cabinet will focus instead on expanding Kuwait's domestic desalination capacity, the article concluded. In early 2005, Iran backed out of a previous agreement to provide water to Kuwait (ref C).

[¶12.](#) (C/NF) Ghanim Al-Otaibi, an Iran watcher at the Kuwaiti National Security Bureau, confirmed that the negotiations had been "postponed" until further notice. He explained that the primary reason for the postponement was Kuwaiti "skepticism" about Iran's sincerity in concluding the deal. Kuwaiti officials believed the Iranians were intentionally stalling, "so they decided to postpone the negotiations," he said.

[¶13.](#) (C/NF) Comment: Kuwait's postponement of negotiations with Iran over fresh water importation is likely more a result of domestic factors than it is regional circumstances. A new desalination plant, scheduled to come on-line July 21, is expected to largely alleviate Kuwait's short-term water needs (ref A) and decrease its need for imported water. The intransigence of Iranian negotiators likely only provided further motivation for Kuwait to pursue efforts to increase its own domestic production. End comment.

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